

LING 510

# The Spring Conference

Abstracts of Presentations

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>April 28</b>	<b>3</b>
	Will Evans. <i>Teaching Contradictions</i> . . . . .	3
	Paulina Alenkina. <i>Definiteness in Russian</i> . . . . .	3
<b>2</b>	<b>April 30</b>	<b>4</b>
	Joseph C. Tonus. <i>French Chaque: A Universal Distributive</i> . . . . .	4
	Hannah Gipperich. <i>Two Universal Quantifiers in Spanish</i> . . . . .	4
<b>3</b>	<b>May 3</b>	<b>4</b>
	Diana Hennessey . <i>Is Any None</i> . . . . .	4
	Jessica Behre . <i>Does Plural Include Singular? A Follow-Up.</i>	5
	Naomi Oberski . <i>Emphasis and Only</i> . . . . .	5
	Robin Gordon Leavitt . <i>There are Two Future Constructions</i> <i>in Lebanese: -rah vs. ha</i> . . . . .	5
<b>4</b>	<b>May 5: Japanese</b>	<b>6</b>
	Tomoko Mori . <i>1-pon, or 1-ko</i> . . . . .	6
	Aaron Simoneau. <i>A Case Study of Context in Classifier Lan-</i> <i>guages: The Japanese General Counter Tsu</i> . . . . .	6
<b>5</b>	<b>May 7</b>	<b>7</b>
	Arielle Weiss . <i>English Ambiguities</i> . . . . .	7
	Kelly Brown. <i>Yucatec Classifiers and Cognition</i> . . . . .	7
<b>6</b>	<b>May 10</b>	<b>7</b>
	Avery Johnson. <i>Autism, Blindness and the Use of Words.</i> . . . .	7
	Liz. <i>TBA</i> . . . . .	8
	Regina Miceli. <i>The Interpretation of a Compound is Not Com-</i> <i>positional.</i> . . . . .	8
	Francisco Meizoso. <i>Each + Poss in Galician</i> . . . . .	8

**April 28**

**“Teaching Contradictions : Resolvable Paradox from  
the Tao Te Ching.”**

**Will Evans**

Taoist teachings use a particular type of logical construction, namely the resolvable paradox, an example of which is “Act without doing”.

When you are presented with a paradox, Gricean Conversational maxims kick in and we assume that the speaker is trying to say something meaningful.

I will give more examples of resolvable paradoxes from the Tao Te Ching and compare them to logical contradictions, to show how they’re different. In logical contradictions the paradox lies in function words with set meanings, the Taoist Paradoxes lie in prototypical meanings of lexical words, which are open to interpretation.

**“Definiteness in Russian”**

**Paulina Alenkina**

Certain languages, like English, make use of determiners to distinguish between definite and indefinite noun phrases. The question arises as to how languages that have no definite or indefinite article convey the same meaning distinction.

In my presentation, I look at Russian, one such language. I will show that the differences encoded by the English articles are encoded by word order in Russian.

**April 30**

**French *Chaque*: A Universal Distributive**  
**Joseph C. Thonus**

*Chaque* is a quantifier translated into English as *each* or/and *every*. The point of my presentation is to discover the properties of *chaque* as a distributive quantifier.

I will present the results of a fieldwork questionnaire in which three native speakers give judgements on the meaning of *chaque* contrasted with the universal quantifier *tout les*.

**Two Universal Quantifiers in Spanish**  
**Hannah Gipperich**

Spanish has two universal quantifiers: *cada* and *todos los*. In my presentation I will show that *todos los* can be either collective or distributive, whereas *cada* is only distributive. I present as evidence the results of a fieldwork questionnaire.

**May 3**

**Is *Any* *None*?**  
**Diana Hennessey**

I review the different ways in which *any* is used in child language. I will present mainly personal interviews, possibly complemented by data from the CHILDES database.

**“Does Plural Include Singular? A Follow-Up.”**

**Jessica Behre**

In my presentation, I will look at the interpretation of plural agreement in child language. I will start by present some background on the literature on plurals. I will then review some results from previous experiments that I did with four children and present some new data.

**“Emphasis and *Only*”**

**Naomi Oberski**

TBA

**“There are Two Future Constructions in Lebanese:**

***-rah vs. ha*”**

**Robin Gordon Leavitt**

I present two future constructions in Lebanese and show that they are semantically different. I support my position by showing native speaker’s reactions to several minimal pairs in different scenarios.

## May 5: Japanese

**“1-pon, or 1-ko?”**

**Tomoko Mori**

In Japanese, the classifiers *-tsu* and *-ko* are used interchangeably when counting NPs (less than 10). However, there are situations where *-ko* cannot be used and only *-tsu* is acceptable.

I have hypothesized that the difference between the two is possibility of counting mass nouns and count nouns.

I will test my hypothesis with a fieldwork questionnaire.

**“ A Case Study of Context in Classifier Languages:  
The Japanese General Counter *Tsu*.”**

**Aaron Simoneau**

Japanese has a classifier system to pick out types and instances of objects from a sum of all such objects and count them. The counter *tsu* does not specify amount, shape, or function of object, only that it is non-animate. What is then its function?

I investigate when and where *tsu* can be used by consulting an informant in two lab sessions. Phrases and sentences containing *tsu* are read to the informant, who is asked for grammaticality/appropriateness judgements.

From preliminary data, it is inferred that *tsu* in Japanese can function like numerals in English, picking out instances of a kind depending on what kind of noun it modifies and the context in which it appears.

This work demonstrates the properties of classifiers, as learned in class. In addition, it shows that enumeration in Japanese is perhaps not so fundamentally different from that in non-classifier languages, like English and that the dividing lines are a bit blurry in places.

**May 7**

**“English Ambiguities”**

**Arielle Weiss**

In my presentation, I will look at two different types of structural ambiguities to see which interpretation people prefer. I am trying to find out if people tend to interpret a sentence one way or another. I also want to look at how these sentences are structured to see if there could be any conclusions as to why one interpretation would be preferred.

**“Yucatec Classifiers and Cognition”**

**Kelly Brown**

My project elaborates on what we talked about in class with respect to classifiers. I contrast English classifiers with Yucatec. I argue that Yucatec classifiers classify on the basis of the substance and material denoted by the NP. English classifiers classify on the basis of shape. Therefore, English speakers attend to shape of an object more than Yucatec speakers and Yucatec speakers attend more to the substance of an object than English speakers. I will explain a study by Lucy.

**May 10**

**“Autism, Blindness and the Use of Words”**

**Avery Johnson**

I start by reviewing all you ever wanted to know about Autism but were too scared to ask. I then present my model of Autism, based on Fodor’s *Modularity of Mind*, which is based on the idea that it is a sensory issue. I then move to show what this says about language, comparing it to what

has been discovered about blindness, deafness, etc. I will show how unique aspects of autisms will enlighten us on specific areas of the way everyone uses language, especially with conversational implicatures, etc.

**TBA**  
**Liz**

**“The Interpretation of a Compound is Not  
Compositional”  
Regina Miceli**

We discussed how compounds are interpreted and formed during the first weeks of class. Such composition of compounds are made through modifiers, loose composition and varying suffixes. I will discuss noun-noun compounds, and adjective-noun compounds. I will also demonstrate an understanding as to how certain nicknames are developed. I will have lists of all these compounds to show exactly where these composition types are used.

**“*Each* + Poss in Galician”  
Francisco Meizoso**

I will look at one feature of Galician that allows to equally distribute possession among an indefinite number of possessors. This allows to elude the vagueness of certain expressions and make a clear difference when it comes to know what possesses what.